

Access to Cardiac Care

– Getting To The Heart of The Matter –

Senator David Cappiello testified in the beginning of May when Danbury Hospital hosted the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) public hearing related to its Certificate of Need (CON) application for advanced cardiology. As many of you know, the Hospital is seeking permission to begin an angioplasty and open-heart surgery program to improve access to the standard of care for residents of western Connecticut and nearby New York State. The public hearing and preparation by Danbury Hospital was a huge success! More than 150 legislators, business leaders,



From left, Rep. Giegler, Rep. Scribner, hospital staff, Sen. Cappiello & Rep. Carson tour the cardiac catheterization unit at Danbury Hospital's cardiac awareness expo held in April

patients and family members provided oral and written testimony to support the Hospital's plans. Nearly 30,000 area residents also expressed their support through both an on-line petition and writing campaign to OHCA asking them to grant the hospital their Certificate of Need. Danbury Hospital also completed its technical hearing with OHCA and DPH in May, and expects a ruling on its CON application later this summer.

What Is A Certificate of Need?

Certificate of Need (CON) is a formal statement that a health care facility, medical equipment purchase, or new medical or expanded service is needed, or that a reduction or termination in service will not have an adverse effect on health care access. The (CON) process was created years ago to ensure the highest quality of healthcare in hospitals and was instituted as a safeguard so that only the best doctors at the best hospitals could perform complex services such as open-heart surgery and angioplasty.



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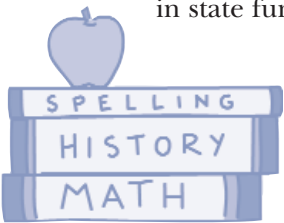


Sen. Cappiello testifies at a public hearing held in May in support of Danbury Hospital’s CON application for advanced cardiology

Education

By working with both state and local officials, I have helped secure millions for public schools in Danbury, Bethel, New Fairfield, and Sherman. Over the next two fiscal years, these 24th District communities will receive over \$53 million in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grants. Children are the future and we need to do everything we can to ensure that they receive the highest quality public education possible.

We have also invested well in higher education in our area of the state by transforming Western Connecticut State University into the college of choice for students throughout Connecticut. I am proud to have secured millions



in state funding to improve WCSU both in and out of the classroom. Anyone who has visited the University over the last several

years can testify to the tremendous improvements that have been made throughout campus.

Just last year I attended the ground-breaking for the new science building, one of many state-of-the-art facilities now on campus. The new building contains lecture rooms, teaching and research laboratories, and common areas.

But we’re not stopping there. I have also supported plans for a new Center for the Arts Building on the Westside Campus for students and professors specializing in the visual arts, music, and theatre. I have also helped secure state funds to improve existing facilities, including over \$2 million for a variety of upgrades to several buildings including Ives Auditorium.

ConnPACE

This session we were able to repeal the controversial “reach back” provision that would have allowed the state to



make claims on the estates of certain ConnPACE recipients. I worked to undo this provision because I do not believe the state should be in the business of trying to recoup program expenses through the probate courts, and I do not think seniors in Connecticut should worry about losing their estates in order to receive a prescription drug benefit.

Teachers’ Retirement Fund

The task of providing quality public education to Connecticut’s students requires a strong partnership between the state’s policy makers and the teaching professionals out on the front lines. Great public education begins with great public school teachers.



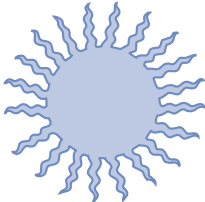
This legislative session, I introduced a resolution (SJ-3 *Resolution Proposing a Constitutional Amendment Concerning the Teachers’ Retirement System*) that would amend the Connecticut State Constitution to make a requirement of fully funding the state’s Teachers’ Retirement Fund (TRF) every year. As you may already know, the state routinely under-funds the TRF as a budget balancing gimmick. I first proposed to outlaw this unsound practice during the 2003 legislative session, but it failed to make it out of committee. However, this year it passed through all of the committees of cognizance. It also passed the Senate with a unanimous vote, only to die on the House calendar.

Currently, the TRF’s unfunded liability varies between three and five billion dollars, and if we continue to shortchange the fund, this number will only grow larger. While amending the state’s Constitution may seem like a drastic measure, it seems to be the only option left for us to protect Connecticut’s teachers and taxpayers from the impact of this impending fiscal crisis.

I believe that if we do not take these measures to protect the TRF, we will be forced, at some point in the future, to strip benefits from working and retired teachers and/or drastically raise taxes in order to cover the cost of maintaining these benefits. Neither of these options is a good choice for Connecticut. That’s why I believe my proposal to make a constitutional requirement of fully funding the TRF not only makes sense for teachers, but for all of the state’s hard working taxpayers.

Environment

The legislature took an important step this year to help protect Connecticut’s air by adopting legislation implementing California’s Low Emissions standards for cars and small trucks, which are the strictest in the nation, by 2008. In addition, manufacturers must ensure that 10% of their new fleet be comprised of zero emission vehicles. Connecticut now joins several other states in the Northeast area that have passed these regulations in an effort to keep the air that we breathe clean for generations to come.



We also adopted legislation that will help reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions as part of a regional effort by New England to clean the air we breathe. The bill deals with sources such as electric generators, industrial sites and smokestack gases and requires improved reporting and study of the consequences of emissions.

Home Heating Oil

Many families in the area lost thousands of dollars and went without heat last winter because of deceptive practices by a few select oil dealers. The General Assembly passed regulatory legislation this year that ensures this will not happen again. This new law requires dealers to maintain any advertised price for at least twenty-four hours or until a new price is published, so unlike last year, dealers will not be able to change their rates on a whim.

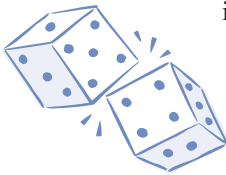


Not only will the new law protect consumers, but it will also help the many legitimate oil dealers in the state. Disingenuous practices by a few dealers were keeping prices artificially low and the honorable businessmen could not keep up. Now we have evened the playing field and rates should remain fair and steady for everybody.

No New Casino

As many of you are aware, in January the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs reversed itself and granted tribal recognition to the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation. Since then an internal BIA memo has surfaced that revealed that the agency had circumvented its standards and recognized the tribe despite the fact that it failed to meet certain standards.

Tribal recognition ought to be about preserving, protecting and honoring cultures that are an important part of our nation’s history. Unfortunately, the BIA has revealed itself to be a broken agency that easily succumbs to the pressure of lawyers and lobbyists interested in establishing another Indian casino.



I am firmly opposed to any new casinos and support efforts to appeal the decision and prepare a court challenge. The last thing our area of the state needs is the significant financial, social, and transportation problems that would occur by opening another casino in Western Connecticut.



Sen. Cappiello (at right), along with Rep. David Scribner (center) and Rep. Hank Bielawa (left), holds an informational meeting and discussion with local elected officials at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford